



Guidelines for keeping hens and other animals on allotments

1. Introduction

Allotment Tenants may keep hens on allotments, but not cockerels as under the Allotments Act 1950. This is on the condition that they are not “kept in such a place or in such a manner as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance”

2. Registration and inspection

- 2.1. Tenants are required to make an application to the council to keep hens on their allotment plot. Details of the number of hens and size and location of hen house and outdoor run must be given. Personal contact details must be provided as well as those of others who will be caring for your chickens during holidays etc so that we may contact them if there is problem. Please request a copy of the Permission to Keep Hens on Allotments application form from the council.
- 2.2. Tenants are responsible for the hen's welfare and must ensure they do not cause a nuisance to others.
- 2.3. The granting of permission is dependent on the councils conditions being met and guidelines followed.
- 2.4. Representatives of the council have the right to inspect the hens at any time. If the Council has cause to investigate complaints of maltreatment, any costs incurred will be passed to the tenant for payment.
- 2.5. The tenants Allotment Tenancy Agreement will be terminated in the instance of failure to adhere to these guidelines and thus in breaching their tenancy agreement.

3. Animal husbandry

3.1. Housing

- 3.1.1 Housing is important in ensuring the welfare of hens and should allow expression of natural behaviours.
- 3.1.2 Both the hen house and outdoor run must be regularly maintained to a good, tidy standard and free from obvious faults that may cause injury.
- 3.1.3 The structures must be sited a minimum of 3 meters from adjacent boundaries abutting residential properties to minimize potential nuisance.
- 3.1.4 A fully enclosed shelter providing a minimum size of 2 square feet (0.2m²) per hen is required. The optimum permitted size will be 4 ft by 3ft. The maximum permitted size of building structure on an allotment is 6ft x 8ft and only one structure per allotment plot.
- 3.1.5 The fully enclosed shelter must provide the following:
 - Protection from predators.

- Clean dry bedding material to absorb moisture and odour (e.g. wood shavings or straw).
- Warmth during colder months or shade during summer. As a general guide the aim should be to achieve a temperature range of 10°C - 20°C.
- Be draught free but have adequate ventilation.
- Perches for sleeping, approximately 305cm wide with rounded corners to enable them to grip.
- Nest boxes for laying eggs.

3.2. Outdoor run

- 3.2.1 Fully enclosed caged run that provides a minimum size of 4 square feet (0.4m²) per Hen, providing the hens with plenty of space to dig, dust themselves and flap their wings. The optimum size is 6ft x 8ft.
- 3.2.2 There should be an additional means of overhead shelter e.g. shrubs to provide hens with protection from direct sunlight, strong wind and driving rain.
- 3.2.3 The structure must be allowed periods of rest to allow the ground to recover.
- 3.2.4 The total area of the hen house and run should not exceed more than 10% of the total allotment plot area although the maximum permitted size will be 10ft x 12ft.

3.3. Food and water

- 3.3.1 Hens should have continuous and plentiful access to cool, clean and fresh water, feed appropriate to the age and species of hen and in sufficient quantities as well as insoluble grit to aid digestion.
- 3.3.2 Food stuffs must be stored so they are kept clean, tidy, and properly protected from rodents and other pests.

3.4. Health

- 3.4.1 The allotment tenant is responsible for ensuring that their hens are free from distress, pain, injury and disease. Advice booklets developed by the RSPCA are available to all allotment tenants on request and can be found on the RSPCA websites.
- 3.4.2 Hens must be vaccinated prior to arrival or at 6 weeks old.
- 3.4.3 Hens will need regular worming (twice a year) and clipping of claw nails to maintain them in a good healthy condition.
- 3.4.4 Hens must be checked regularly for lice and the houses treated for Red Mite.
- 3.4.5 Any health serious or longstanding or contagious problems must be reported to the council immediately as well as details on the treatment being received and notification when the problem has cleared.
- 3.4.6 The henhouse and run should be cleaned a minimum of once a week or more frequently as necessary.
- 3.4.7 Tenants are responsible for the removal of all arisings from the site. Soiled bedding must not be composted anywhere on the allotment site.
- 3.4.8 Poultry need companionship and should be kept in groups of two.
- 3.4.9 The maximum number of hens permitted per allotment tenant should be 5.

3.5. Nuisance to Neighbours & Cleanliness

- 3.5.1 Provided the above guidelines on housing, food and water and health are followed, hens should not become a nuisance to others. (See Clause 2.4 of the Allotment Tenancy Agreement).

3.6. Breeding & Profit

- 3.6.1 Allotment tenants are not permitted to breed hens on the allotment site nor profit from the sale of produce (See Clause 2.16 of the Allotment Tenancy Agreement).